

EVALUATION OF PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY DISABLED CONSUMERS IN TOURISM DESTINATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS: SINOP EXAMPLE

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Received June 2025; Accepted June 2025; Published August 2025;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess15.402>

ABSTRACT

While Sinop has been the subject of many studies before, this study is important because, as a result of the examinations made in the databases, no study on disability in Sinop province has been seen in the literature. This research, which was conducted to facilitate the daily lives of disabled consumers living in Sinop and to ensure their active participation in society, sheds light on a very important issue. The main purpose of the study is to determine the obstacles and needs faced by disabled consumers living in Sinop, to evaluate the opportunities offered by service providers and to present suggestions for improvements that can be made in this area. The results of the research will both shed light on the measures to be taken to make Sinop disabled-friendly city and to increase awareness of disabled rights in our country. In line with this purpose, face-to-face interviews were conducted to determine the problems experienced by disabled consumers regardless of their disability class. Disabled consumers were reached Google forms and surveys and data was collected in this way. It is estimated that there are around 6,000 disabled people in Sinop. Data were obtained from 155 disabled consumers of different age and gender groups living in Sinop with the data collection tool used in the study. Thematic analysis method was used in the analysis of the data. Regarding the research results, it was concluded that there are many physically disabled individuals in Sinop province, there are few applications and places for the disabled, transportation facilities are inadequate, they mostly shop for food, they do not prepare a list before shopping, they do not shop without doing price research and they shop from fixed points, and they do not know their rights in case of problems.

Keywords: Disabled Individuals, Disabled Consumers, Service Providers, Problems.

JEL Codes: I30

INTRODUCTION

People can become disabled from birth or sometimes unexpectedly due to a sudden situation such as an accident or illness. Depending on their condition, there are mental disabilities, physical and mental disabilities, hearing, vision, hearing, and speech disabilities. According to the World Health Organization, disability is a disability, deficiency, psychological and physical anatomy that is seen to be deficient from normal people when viewed in terms of health (Yenipazarlı et al., 2020). Disability conditions are divided into five types with different reasons. These are: Hearing and speech, vision, mental, chronic and orthopedic disabilities (MEB, 2024). Hearing and speech impaired individuals are people who have lost functions such as speech and hearing due to a central neural disability. They experience problems in their body functions and balance. Visually impaired individuals try to fill their sense of sight with their other organs and feelings. They need objects and items that can be touched, especially because they learn by touching. Mentally disabled individuals, on the other hand, cannot adapt to other people and exhibit different reactions and behaviors than normal. Orthopedically disabled individuals are individuals who are affected by sudden illnesses or accidents and become disabled. They cannot fulfill the vast majority of the requirements they need in daily life. Chronically disabled individuals are those who do not improve or improve an obstacle or condition even after treatments and rehabilitation, and this obstacle constantly emerges and continues, which constitutes a chronic disability (Thompson et al. 2003). This disability continues with them and becomes a chronic condition. Such disabilities do not allow the individual to work or return to normal life, and make them in need of care and treatment (Hacıbebekoğlu et al., 2015). There are many problems experienced by disabled consumer individuals in our society. They face problems in shopping malls, public or private sectors, employment areas, social activities, schools, cafes, restaurants and many other places and locations. The most basic problems faced by disabled individuals are unemployment and poverty for their livelihood. There are big differences between disabled individuals living in rural or urban areas. Even normal life is harder in villages and rural areas, and it becomes more unbearable for disabled individuals. Even though it seems that cities where disabled people living in cities have better alternatives or where there are certain privileges are more ideal, on the one hand, the crowd can be a negative environment for them. On the other hand, the place where disabled individuals have the most problems is when they are intertwined with society, the society's perspective and behavior towards them affects them for many reasons. Many disabled individuals live in Sinop city. Despite this, no researcher has done any work in this field before. From this perspective, conducting this research is important for both disabled people and individuals living in Sinop province.

The concept of disability and disability status. People who have lost their physical, mental or physical condition are called disabled. It is said that the first disabled person was a disabled person found in Northern Iraq in 45 thousand BC. It was determined that this disabled person could not see in his left eye, his right hand and arm were paralyzed, and he had difficulty walking. However, despite all these negativities, there is an opinion that the disabled person was somehow rehabilitated or treated. Because it is thought that this disabled person lived until the age of 35-40 (Engelsizler Aksesuar, 2024). People who are physically disabled are defined as orthopedic, vision, speech and hearing. In this way, disabled individuals have not only these aspects but also social and economic obstacles (Genç and Çat, 2013). However, the obstacles of disabled people with other people are not investigated much, so it is assumed that disabled people only have physical and economic obstacles. Disability status of the Turkish population covers 6.9% (4,876,000) (Ministry of Family and Social Work, 2024). When we look at the world population, there are approximately 15% of the world population, that is, one billion disabled people (Barrier-Free Life Association, 2024). As the age increases, the metabolism and physique of the person undergo certain changes and as a result, major or minor disabilities also occur. Disability statuses are as follows; While losing 80% of the working capacity is called 1st degree disability, losing 60% of the working capacity is called 2nd degree disability and losing 40% of the working capacity is called 3rd degree disability. In direct proportion to the disability status and quality of life, as the degree of disability increases, people have to live with their quality of life and disadvantages in their lives (World Disability Report, 2011). Disability or handicap mostly occurs later and most likely arises from diseases or can occur with genetic hormonal disorders or during pregnancy and birth.

Disabled problems. When people reach a certain age, they think that they live with a weight on their bodies and that body is now heavier. As old age increases, some physical and physical balances begin to deteriorate and they become unable to perform the tasks they need to perform. After a while, this situation becomes unbearable for them and when joints, tissues, nerves, limbs, etc. that lose or reduce their functions cannot function at all after a while, this is called disability (Genç, 2015). When it comes to disability problems, the first thing that comes to mind is

physical disability. It constitutes a problem and obstacle that most people can almost see with their eyes. Physical disabilities are especially among the most difficult situations for disabled individuals (Kaufman-Scarborough and Baker, 2005). 67% of physically disabled individuals say that the sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on the roads are not suitable for disabled individuals (Bozacı, 2016). In addition, 63% of them think that the apartments and buildings they live in are not suitable either. 59% say that markets, shops, stores and shopping places, 58% say that public buildings, and 55% say that places like post offices and banks are not suitable for them (TÜİK, 2010).

When we look at it from an educational perspective, 36.33% of the disabled are illiterate. Some disabled citizens are interested in some of their rights such as defending their own rights and requesting education at home (3.5%). Using these legal rights (4.2%) is their greatest wish and they want to see that they are cared for to some extent. When we look at it from an educational perspective, families should help such disabled children not like other children but by taking more care and even by getting education from relevant places in a way that is suitable for children with special needs. As disabled individuals, their education may need to be provided by family members or with support from relevant institutions (Küçükali, 2014). Occupational and income problems are another issue that disabled individuals experience. When we look at the situation of disabled individuals, the part of them that is not included in the workforce is 78%. However, an average of 56% of disabled individuals want to work in jobs that do not exhaust them physically and do not require extra strength and endurance. They see them as having very short breaks and working part-time from the job they can do. They also expect the social assistance and solidarity activities of the disabled to be increased (TÜİK, 2010). When it comes to family problems, the family is the source that provides the greatest support to the disabled. Families that have been caring for the disabled since childhood may encounter greater problems when they grow up. In addition, family members may be inadequate in meeting the demands and needs of the disabled individual as they grow older, and their problems may increase day by day. In addition to the disabled child in the family, other non-disabled children may be affected by negative situations such as emotional, depression and social incompatibility (Burke and Montgomery, 2001). Due to the hesitations of disabled children such as being a burden to their families, both the family and the child should be helped with guidance. Although the non-disabled sibling has a sense of responsibility, the fact that the parents show more interest in the other sibling causes that sibling to experience feelings such as jealousy, hatred, being a good child, and anger.

What is consumption and consumer? Consumption is the process of people using and consuming produced goods and services. This process includes meeting people's basic needs (food, shelter, clothing) as well as their desires such as luxury goods and entertainment. Consumption, which is a fundamental part of the economic cycle, encourages production and increases employment. In addition, consumption functions as a means of creating cultural and social identity; people express themselves and establish connections with social groups through the products they consume. Consumption is diversified into durable (long-lasting) and non-durable (short-term exhaustion) goods and services (such as health, education, transportation). From an economic perspective, while increased consumption contributes to economic growth and employment, excessive consumption can cause inflation. In the historical process, the role of the 19th century in the formation of modern understandings of consumption and social life is extremely great. During this period, important developments took place that made consumption a topic of discussion and attracted the attention of social scientists. The most important of these developments is that the consumption-oriented profit approach became central with the rise of capitalism. While capitalism enabled the production of goods and services to reach mass dimensions, it deepened the contradictions between the bourgeoisie (the minority that dominates the capital) and the proletariat (the majority that sells their labor) with the transformation of the feudal mode of production. In this system, all products and labor power became buyable and sellable, making consumption an indispensable element for the sustainability of capitalism. The massification of goods production, the increase in capital flow, the spread of colonialism and the emergence of capitalism as a global power led to significant changes in individuals. Industrialization is also an important part of this transformation; the capitalist economy gained its real power with the Industrial Revolution (Erdemsoy, 2023). The Industrial Revolution created a significant deviation from the traditional perception of consumption and paved the way for the emergence of modern consumption patterns. This new understanding of consumption, which became evident especially in the late 19th century, developed as a result of lifestyles in cities and suburbs. During this period, changes in the field of production and consumption show that traditional styles have been left behind. While traditional consumption was limited to meeting basic needs, in modern consumption, desires and wishes have also come to the fore. In Max Weber's analysis, the strange view that traditional peasants have towards those who work for more than subsistence provides an example of this transformation. People are now looking for satisfaction not only economically but also socially and culturally. Consumption has increasingly become more meaningful for individuals and has begun to play a symbolic role in a dream world identified with desires. In this context, consumption has ceased to be a means of meeting needs, and has also assumed the function of establishing identity

and gaining social status (Erdemsoy, 2023). While consumption is defined in economic literature as meeting needs and desires, the content of this definition has changed with the development of the information society; here, desires have begun to replace needs. The concept of consumption was first discussed in 1899 in Thorstein Veblen's Theory of Leisure Class, and after this study, Herbert Marcuse classified needs as real and fake (Marcuse, 2022). Marcuse defined nutrition, clothing and shelter as real needs, while he counted rest, entertainment and needs that emerged under the influence of advertisements as fake needs. Ivan Illich, in his work The Slavery of Consumption, states that in a consumer society, life is organized around objects and social progress is measured by the ability to access these objects (Illich, 1990). Jean Baudrillard, on the other hand, sees consumption as a consumption of symbols and values, arguing that every desire and relationship becomes an object and symbol (Hatipler, 2017). According to Baudrillard, consumption should be evaluated as a discourse; it is a way of communicating about modern society itself (Baudrillard, 2016). Consumption is a system that enables the organization of indicators and the integration of social groups. Consumption creates a moral and ideological value system and communication and exchange structures. Robins, who has a positive approach to consumption, argues that consumption allows people to get away from their daily problems and that this action functions as a social defense strategy; thus, consumption is seen as a way to get away from anxiety and fear in an effort to cope with the real world (Robins, 1999). A consumer is defined as an individual or group who purchases and uses goods and services. Consumers are one of the basic building blocks of the economic system and play a critical role in the functioning of the market. Consumption processes involve individuals choosing various products and services in order to meet their needs and desires.

Service providers for the disabled. Disability has been addressed through various definitions and perspectives throughout history. These definitions range from a perspective that blames and excludes the disabled individual to understandings that view accessibility problems due to the disabled individual's loss of ability as an individual and medical issue (Serdar, 2023). Differences in discourses and actions towards certain groups around the world and unequal practices have continued to exist as an ontological reality in almost every society and have deeply affected practices in the economic, political and social areas of daily life, creating a hierarchy. Those most negatively affected by the consequences of this discriminatory structure are groups that are trapped in disadvantages and cannot benefit from social opportunities equally. When the basic characteristics of these groups are examined, it is seen that those who differ from the mainstream society in terms of factors such as ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, old age, poverty and immigration come first. Disabled people, one of these groups who cannot find the opportunity to live an equal, fair and effective life in mainstream society, have gained awareness of the marginalization within the hierarchical structure that has emerged over time and the continuity of living conditions shaped by discrimination and have developed various objections against such discriminatory practices (Kaldık, 2022). One of these objections is the disability rights movement, which has become a movement that started in the United States and England in the 1960s and spread all over the world in order to make the individual experiences and problems of disabled people visible and known, to examine the root causes of their marginalization and exclusion, and to defend their citizenship rights (Yelçe, 2020). Since the 1960s, there have been significant changes in the perspective towards disabled individuals, a more sensitive approach has been adopted regarding their rights and needs, and various studies have been carried out in this direction (Kalaycı and Akın, 2019). Services for disabled individuals are provided by state institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Governmental institutions, ministries such as the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education, and the Ministry of Health provide various services for individuals with disabilities. These services include home care, rehabilitation, special education, health services, and social support services. In Western countries such as the United States, England, and Germany, studies initiated under the leadership of civil society organizations have increased awareness of the rights of individuals with disabilities and paved the way for significant developments in this area (Kalaycı and Akın, 2019). There are many civil society organizations that advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities and create awareness. These organizations provide education, rehabilitation, social activities, and consultancy services for individuals with disabilities. In the private sector, private rehabilitation centers, companies that produce products and services for the disabled, and businesses that support the employment of the disabled are the main actors in the private sector that provide services for the disabled. Service providers for the disabled provide various services to increase the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and ensure their participation in social life. Some of these important service providers and the services they offer can be summarized as follows. Disabled Care and Rehabilitation Centers: Provide care and rehabilitation services to individuals with physical, mental and spiritual disabilities who have difficulty meeting their daily living needs. Barrier-Free Living Centers: These are centers that develop the daily living skills of disabled individuals and encourage their participation in social life in order to increase their living standards. Homes of Hope: These are additional units that provide services in refugee homes or apartments in order to support the active participation of disabled individuals in social life. Day Care Centers: These

are centers where daily care is provided by the families of disabled individuals and that allow families to support the participation of disabled individuals in social life. Home Care Support Service: In order for disabled individuals to receive home care support, applications must be made to the Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Services or Social Service Centers. This service is not provided to the disabled individuals themselves, but to the relatives or guardians who provide care. Social Aids: Social aids such as disability pension and needy pension are provided according to certain criteria in order to improve the living standards of disabled individuals. These aids help improve the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and ensure their active participation in social life (Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2024).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Method and data. The accessibility problems experienced by disabled consumers residing in Sinop province and the opportunities offered by service providers to these individuals were evaluated through a survey study conducted manually via Google Forms and to consumers who did not have online access. In this study, various dimensions such as the obstacles that disabled individuals encounter in their daily lives, the difficulties they experience in accessing public and private sector services and their expectations in this regard were examined. The questions asked in the survey were created by experts and relevant faculty members. Since the number of disabled individuals and their distribution by provinces were not clearly provided on the data.tuik.gov.tr and aile.gov.tr websites, an attempt was made to reach the highest number of disabled consumers living in Sinop province. The online survey method allowed for the collection of data in a short time by reaching a wide participant pool. 155 disabled individuals who want to participate voluntarily constitute the sample of the research. Within the scope of the study, 155 disabled individuals were reached as solid data. The obtained data constitute an important data source for the development of more effective policies for the needs of disabled individuals in Sinop province and the improvement of existing services. The data obtained within the scope of the research were subjected to analysis, and conclusions and suggestions were made with the findings. **Findings.**

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants.

Variable	Group	f	%
Gender	Woman	60	38,7
	Man	95	61,3
Marital Status	Single	83	53,5
	Married	72	46,5
Age	12-24	49	31,6
	25-34	31	20,0
	35-44	44	28,4
	45-60	17	11,0
	60 age and over	14	9,0
Educational Status	Literate	30	19,4
	Primary School- Middle School	45	29,0
	High School	43	27,8
	Associate Degree	15	9,7
	Undergraduate	21	13,6
	Postgraduate	1	0,6
Job	Student	38	24,5
	Unemployed	34	21,9
	Civil Servant	29	18,8
	Worker	16	10,4
	Self-Employed	12	7,8
	Retired	19	12,2
	Housewife	7	4,5
Income Status	No Income	10	6,5
	I Do Not Want To Specify	22	14,2
	0-17.002 TL	43	27,8
	17.003-40.000 TL	50	32,2
	40.001-70.000 TL	21	13,5
	70.001 and over	9	5,8

When the demographic findings of the participants are examined, it is seen that 61.3% (95 people) are female and 38.7% are male. In terms of marital status, it is understood that 53.5% are married and the rest are single. When the disabled individuals are evaluated in terms of their ages, it is known that approximately 48.4% are in the middle age range. In terms of their educational status, it is seen that the majority of the participants are primary and secondary school graduates, 29.0% (45 people). When their occupational status is examined, it is understood that the number of students (24.5%) and unemployed (21.9%) is high. When the income status of the participants is examined, it is seen that 10 (6.5%) people do not have an income and 22 (14.1%) people do not want to state their income. It is seen that the majority of the participants (32.2%) have an income between 17,003 and 40,000 TL and only 9 people have an income of 70,001 TL and above.

Table 2. Participants' Disability Status.

Variable	Group	f	%
Disability Status	Physical	86	55,4
	Psychological	3	1,9
	Mental	40	25,9
	Other	26	16,8

When the participants in the study were asked about their disability status, it was understood that the majority (55.4%) had physical disabilities, 25.9% had mental disabilities, 1.9% had psychological disabilities and 16.8% had other disabilities. Other disabilities were stated as hearing, vision, epilepsy, language and speech disabilities and disabilities resulting from chronic diseases.

Table 3. Participants' Views on the City They Live in.

Variable	Group	f	%
Transportation facilities in your city are suitable for individuals with special needs.	Yes	22	14,2
	No	133	85,8
The applications of public buildings and public institutions are designed with individuals with special needs in mind.	Yes	30	19,4
	No	125	80,6
Physical conditions such as parks, gardens, roads and open spaces in your city are suitable for individuals with special needs.	Yes	16	10,3
	No	139	89,4
The interior and exterior spaces of businesses (cafes, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels, game rooms, etc.) are designed with individuals with special needs in mind.	Yes	10	6,4
	No	145	93,6
Businesses (cafes, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels, game rooms, etc.) are provided with equal use and easy access opportunities for all users.	Yes	15	9,7
	No	140	90,3

According to the participants' answers to questions about the practices implemented for the disabled in the destination they live in, the overwhelming majority (85.8%) is that transportation facilities are not designed for the disabled. It is also understood that public buildings and public institutions in the city are not designed for the disabled (80.6%) and that the parks, gardens, roads and open spaces in the city are not suitable for the disabled (89.4%). It is observed that businesses in the city (cafes, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels, game rooms, etc.) are not designed for the disabled (93.6), do not provide equal service to all users and do not have easy access (90.3%).

Table 4. Participants' Views on Shopping Preferences.

Variable	Group	f	%
How often do you shop?	Yes	21	13,5
	No	29	18,7
	Most of the Time	52	33,5
	Sometimes	25	16,2
	Rarely	28	18,1
Do you need someone's help while shopping?	Yes	55	35,5
	No	42	27,1
	Most of the Time	24	15,4
	Sometimes	26	16,8
	Rarely	8	5,2

Which consumer goods do you buy most during your shopping?	Food	134	86,6
	Technology	8	5,2
	Textiles	6	3,8
	Durable Consumer Goods	6	3,8
	Other	1	0,6
Do you prepare a list before shopping?	Yes	50	32,2
	No	51	33,0
	Most of the Time	22	14,2
	Sometimes	29	18,7
	Rarely	3	1,9
Do you research prices before purchasing goods or services?	Yes	70	45,1
	No	28	18,1
	Most of the Time	18	11,6
	Sometimes	29	18,7
	Rarely	10	6,5
Which method do you prefer to shop with?	From a fixed point of sale	111	71,6
	On the internet	34	22,0
	Door shopping	7	4,5
	Television	3	1,9

When asked how often do participants shop, it is seen that they mostly shop once a week (33.5%) and when asked if they need help while shopping, they answered yes (35.5%). When asked which consumer goods they buy the most, they mostly answered food (86.6%), and when asked if they prepare a list before shopping, they mostly answered no (33.0%). It is understood that a large portion of them (45.1%) do price research before purchasing goods or services, and a large portion (71.6%) prefer to shop from fixed sales points.

Table 5. Participants' Views on Consumer Behavior.

Variable	Group	f	%
Do you know the basic rights that consumers have?	Yes	66	42,5
	No	89	57,5
As a consumer, do you believe that consumer rights are protected in our country?	Yes	27	17,5
	No	128	82,5
Where do you go for a solution when the goods or services you purchased are defective?	Consumer Problems	50	32,2
	To the Arbitration Board	15	9,7
	To Websites That Protect Consumer Rights	64	41,3
	I Don't Know	19	12,2
	To the Consumer Court	7	4,5
What are the sectors, goods and services that you experience the most problems with? (Please mark only one option.)	None	34	21,9
	Food	22	14,2
	Textile	16	10,4
	Technological Products	45	29,1
	Banking	26	16,8
	Education	4	2,5
	White Goods	8	5,1

Participants responded to the question of whether they know their basic rights regarding consumers with a large percentage of respondents stating that they do not know, while 82.5% of them responded no to the question of whether they believe that consumer rights are protected in our country. When asked where they would go for a solution if the goods or services you purchased were defective, they generally responded that they did not know (41.3%), and when asked about the sectors, goods and services they had the most problems with, it was observed that technological products (29.1%) were the first to be mentioned.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Disabled individuals encounter serious social resistance to participate in social life all over the world. Marginalization policies are mentioned regarding disabled individuals who are among the disadvantaged groups.

Failure to ensure the participation of disabled individuals in social life (public service, education, transportation, employment, etc.) causes the disabled individual to be in deprivation and poverty. Public service, education, shopping, transportation and employment services that will enable the disabled to live in social life at decent standards need to be organized. Local governments are legal entities elected by the public, which provide services in the fields of social, economic, cultural, health, transportation, zoning, environment and well-being, in order to meet the “common” and “civil” needs of the people within their borders. Local governments are responsible for preventing people from being deprived of the services provided due to their physical adequacy, age, gender, etc. and for ensuring easy access to all services for all social groups (Çoşkun, 2010).

Although the disabled are gaining new gains every day with state policies, it is not enough for disabled individuals to benefit from equal rights and opportunities under current conditions. If a disabled individual cannot overcome the physical obstacles of the environment and cannot receive public services, if appropriate educational opportunities cannot be provided for the disabled individual, if sidewalks, public transportation vehicles, public institutions and organizations are not suitable for the disabled, if they cannot shop comfortably, if living conditions are difficult, if employment opportunities suitable for their disability cannot be provided, then it means that they are struggling for the disabled (Öztabak, 2017). It is seen that some of the problems experienced by disabled individuals in every field around the world are on the agenda. The most important of these problems is that the experiences they have in tourism destinations make the holiday process challenging and that the facilities offered by accommodation establishments and transportation companies cannot be improved. In order for inclusive tourism to become sustainable, the barriers preventing disadvantaged groups from accessing tourism as producers need to be overcome. In the process of selecting new people and places on the destination map, it is necessary to determine who can contribute to this process. For this reason, accommodation and travel businesses need to be more understanding and respectful to their guests and listen to their needs (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). Scheyvens and Biddulph emphasize that these elements should be evaluated and their applicability should be increased in the development of tourism and inclusive sustainable disability-friendly tourism (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). The main aim here is to expand the frame of guests in the destination area, to be able to apply tourism for individuals with special needs to guide their own values in order to shed light on the future agenda for accessible tourism within the scope of sustainability. Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018) argue that accessible tourism addresses only one aspect of inclusive tourism, because inclusive tourism should not only address accessibility, but also address all socially and economically excluded and divided populations at a broad level. Looking at the international literature, it is seen that there are few studies and very few evidence-based studies that show that people with disabilities are largely engaged in social work as producers who want to experience a visit to a destination in the tourism sector. Generally, studies overwhelmingly focus on people with disabilities as employees, mainly in the hospitality sector and mostly in hotels. For example, some studies have assessed the barriers and challenges to employing people with disabilities in hotels or the benefits and outcomes of hospitality organizations employing people with disabilities (Bengisu, Balta, 2011; Kalargyrou, 2014; Kalargyrou, Volis, 2014). Human resources policies and practices in hotels that employ people with disabilities (Groschl, 2004; Groschl, 2007) and employer perspectives on the employment of people with disabilities in hospitality organizations have also been considered (Houtenville, Kalargyrou, 2012; Jasper, Waldhart, 2013; Paez, Arendt, 2014). Guest and consumer perspectives on people with disabilities as employees in hotels and restaurants have been less studied (Kuo, Kalargyrou, 2014; Kalargyrou, Berber, Kuo, 2018).

Fewer studies have examined hospitality organizations that operate as social enterprises and provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities (Kalargyrou, Kalargiros, Kutz, 2020). For example, the social innovation 'Brownies & Downies' was born out of a desire to see more people with disabilities playing a role in the hospitality sector and by extension in wider society. The coffee shop concept, which started in the Netherlands and has now spread across Europe and South Africa, includes training centers, placement providers and coffee shops where people with intellectual disabilities are engaged in preparing and serving coffee and food (Marks, Hidden, Brownies & Downies, 2018). An important theme in the literature is the issue of (non)participation in tourism (participation). While it is possible to cite studies that there is a common misconception that people with disabilities cannot or do not travel (Daniels, M.; Rodgers, E.; Wiggins, 2005; Daruwalla & Darcy (Daruwalla, Darcy, 2005), it should be cautioned that such segregation and discrimination is psychological and therefore, future in-depth studies are needed to measure and analyze existing attitude barriers as well as the wider potential for attitude change (Daruwalla, Darcy, 2005). Viewing disability as a social construct “provides context for understanding the relationship between the individual's experience, society's attitudes and the focus on creating environments that enable independent, equitable and dignified inclusion” (McIntosh, 2020) Aitchison (Aitchison, 2009) suggests that the current exclusionary practice of industry mimics the exclusionary nature of society itself. Indeed, as disability is socially constructed, it requires a social solution and social action. There are several studies on the importance of multiple

and diverse stakeholder perspectives, participation and collaboration in the development of accessible tourism (Singleton, Darcy, 2003) Michopoulou and Buhalis (2011) provide a comprehensive analysis of accessible tourism stakeholders. They emphasize that given that people with disabilities themselves have lived experience of disability and a variety of access needs and support needs, it is particularly important that their voices are heard (Michopoulou, Darcy, Ambrose, Buhalis, 2015; Gillovic, McIntosh, Stakeholder, 2015; Gillovic, McIntosh, 2015). In practice, however, this stakeholder group is considered to have limited opportunities to meaningfully contribute to tourism policy, planning and development. Therefore, “collaborative efforts in the development of accessible tourism can be enhanced to move the agenda towards inclusive tourism in an innovative way” (Nyanjom, Boxall, Slaven, 2018, McIntosh, Cockburn, 2020). This is also one of the key issues that requires future attention to consider co-creative methods of stakeholder engagement for collaborative dialogue, equitable participation, mutual learning and questioning of existing knowledge gaps and assumptions held by powerful tourism stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

Developing services for disabled individuals is the responsibility of all individuals in society. More comprehensive and effective services should be provided for the needs of disabled individuals with the cooperation of the state, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The full and effective participation of disabled individuals in society will benefit not only them but the entire society. When the demographic findings of the participants are examined, it is understood that the majority of them are women, and in terms of their marital status, 53.5% are married. When the disabled individuals are evaluated in terms of their ages, it is seen that they are in the middle age range, and in terms of their educational status, the majority of the participants are primary and secondary school graduates. When their occupational status is examined, it is stated that the number of students and unemployed people is high, and in terms of income, the majority of them have incomes between 17,003 and 40,000 TL. According to the disability status of the participants in the study, it is understood that a large portion (55.4%) has physical disability, 25.9% has mental disability, 1.9% has mental disability and 16.8% has other disabilities. Other disabilities are expressed as hearing, vision, epilepsy, language and speech disabilities and disabilities resulting from chronic diseases. As a result of the research, disabled individuals living in Sinop province stated that the province is not suitable for the lives of the disabled, so it is recommended that public buildings, institutions, parks, gardens, etc. suitable for the disabled be built throughout Sinop, made suitable for the disabled and transportation facilities should be arranged accordingly. Businesses need to design spaces for the disabled and implement practices that will enable individuals to shop comfortably. In addition, training should be provided regarding consumer rights for the disabled and guidance should be provided regarding consumer complaints. Disabled individuals have the right to live like normal people, have consumer rights like normal people, and individuals, institutions and businesses must provide convenience to disabled individuals. The fact that there were no studies on disabled people or disability in Sinop Province in the past years reveals the importance of this study. This study will raise awareness as well as being a reference for future studies. It is also recommended that this study or similar studies be conducted at regular intervals and applied to other disabled people and groups.

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